

BLUES NEWS

The CBS Tent is a Rockin', Come On In!

2017 Cuyahoga County Fair



THANK YOU !

The 2017 CBS Blues and Beer Garden tent was a huge success. Performers and volunteers created a welcoming place for fair goers to grab a drink and listen to some of north east Ohio's best blues and rock bands each night of faire week. The CBS Fair Committee extends a heartfelt thank-you to all volunteers and performers.



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Do you have an idea for an article?—email Elaine elainecbs145@gmail.com



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Thank You CC Fair Bands!

Monday August 07th

- Joe Rollin Porter Solo performance and Originals
- Back Street Blues Band House Rockin' Blues, Originals, Brantt KingBee Hamilton - Vocals/Harp, Adriane Bennett – Bass, Jimmy Lee -Vocals/Lead Guitar, Bubba Ruscin -Drums/Vocals

Tuesday August 08th

- Victor Samalot Acoustic guitarist mixing Latin, Jazz
- Skip Werke Band BC Hudson Guitar & vocals, Ed Wheeler - Drums, Jmy T - Vocals, Tom Chernitsky - Guitar & vocals, Bob Laeng - Guitar and Bass, Ron Papa J Jackson - Keys
- Deano and the Trouble Makers Dean Kiss - Lead and vocals, Bob -Bass, Dave - Percusion, Murphy Harp - Sax and Vocals
- Blue Matter Buddy Collura Lead vocals & guitar, Fletch Little - Bass, Doc Klimonek - percussion

Weds August 09th

Tyrone Blue Sinsation – Tyron Hornbuckle - Lead vocals & guitar, Allen - Bass, Rick percussion

Bob Frank

- Hare of the Dog, Linda Weiss Vocals, Jay Weiss - percussion, Billy McConnaughey - guitar, Phil Merkun - guitar & vocals, Mike Daley - bass, Mike Yurik - drums, Tom Hoven harmonica
- Second Hand Dogs, Daria Jean Eberwein.-.Vocals and Percussion, Phil Eberwein.-. Guitar and Vocals, Troy Zingale.-.Bass, Nate Seidel.-..Percussionist

<u>Thursday August 10th</u> Gary Rice, Blues Historian

- DD & the Knockers Kris DD Diehl vocals and rhythm, KB Spork – Guitar and Vocals, Dave Kasl – Bass and vocals, Scotty Velardo -Percussion
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- The Gundry Project Band Mr. Rob Gundry- guitar & vocals, Mellvin Bell - Guitar & vocals, Doyle Weber bass, Michael "Honeycomb" Henighan - vocals, flute & harp, Keith Davis - drums & vocals
- **The Bob Laeng Blues Gang** Laeng-Guitar & Vocals, Jimmy Deamiches - Guitar & Vocals, Tim Reeves – Bass, Dan Haller – Drums
- Blue Collar Band Anthony Graceffo Percussion, Tommy Tucker – Bass, Blue Steve Martin – Lead Guitar and Vocals

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- Grady Miller, Cathy Grady Vocal and violin, Michael Grady Vocals and guitar
- **Mojo Honey** Mary Rose vocals & rhythm guitar, Denny Massari vocals & lead guitar Budda Ruscin vocals & percussion Tom Harvey -Bass

Pedro Diaz

- Idol Frets, Adrian Higgins- Drums and Vocals , Joe Ferrara- Guitar and Vocals Mike Kelly- Guitar and Vocals, Tim Reeves- Bass and Sound
- **Gypsy** Gypsy (Lori Matuza) Lead Vocals, Lloyd Sarno - Guitar, Chris Bowman - Bass, Kimberly Sullivan -Rhythm Guitar, Gary Eisner - Keys, Donnie Richter - Drums

Sunday August 13th

DiDi Franklin Band

- Sam Hooper Group Sam Hooper Guitar & Vocals, David Green – Percussion , Derrick James – Bass, Jefferson Rice – Sax & Keyboard
- Gaetano's Underworld Blues Band Gaetano Letizia – Guitar/Vocals, Larry Keller – Bass, Mike D'Elia -Drums
- BluesDeville, "The Doughboy" Denny Mangan - Vocals, Harp, Accordian, Laura Lee, Vocals, Bobby Hoffmann – Guitar & Vocals, Jim Flynn -Electric Bass, Jack Flynn - Drums





Blues You Should Know

by Bob Frank

PERCY MAYFIELD

The current Poet Laureate of the United States is Tracy K. Smith, an African-American mother of three from Princeton NJ, who has won, among other awards, the Pulitzer Prize.

But did you know that the blues has its own "Poet Laureate". That would be Percy Mayfield, the songwriter and



vocalist who's life and career were a mixture of great success along with great hardship and tragedy.

Mayfield was born in 1920 in Minden, LA, a mid-sized community located in the middle of the state about thirty-five miles East of Shreveport. Mayfield's mother died when he was he was twelve, and while he managed to complete high school, his education was interrupted by frequent absences that included riding the rails and traveling about in search of work. Despite the spottiness of his education, Mayfield showed a marked talent and interest in poetry. He began transferring that interest to songwriting and in 1940 moved to Los Angeles.

In Los Angeles, he began pitching songs to various record companies, with the primary hope that his hero Jimmy Witherspoon would record them. When he presented a demo recording of *Two Years of Torture* to Al Patrick at Supreme records Patrick said that, yes, he would record the song but that he wanted Mayfield to sing it himself. That record, and subsequent releases, did well enough for Art Rupe of Specialty Records, (Little Richard, Guitar Slim, Roy Milton, Soul Stirrers), to sign him to an extended contract as recording artist and songwriter. Another stoke of good luck found him teaming up with Maxwell Davis, the saxophonist and arranger also responsible for many of T-Bone Walker's recorded arrangements. Davis was easily the best and most creative arranger of the era.

Mayfield, at that time, wrote mainly blues-ballads, slower songs, that featured his creative genius for lyrics, that defined heartbreak, longing and loneliness in ways previously unexpressed in the blues. In 1950 he cut the song many consider to be one of finest compositions in all of American songwriting, *Please Send Me Someone to Love*. It's a song in the form of a prayer or a plea asking for world peace, an end to discrimination, and as a sort of abashed personal request follow-up, someone to love. It's a bit like the way a child writes to Santa Claus asking for no more war, and end to world hunger, and, if you can get around to it Santa, a bicycle.

Please Send Me Someone to Love was Mayfield's biggest seller (under his own name), spending 27 weeks on the charts. It's been covered dozens of times by everyone from BB King to Sade to Fiona Apple and remains a staple in the blues, jazz and r&b repertoire.

Another Mayfield song from that era that has been covered repeatedly is *River's Invitation*, maybe the most wry, ironic song about suicide ever written.

The early 1950s were a time of great success for Mayfield. He was tall, thin and exceptionally good-looking, attributes that contributed to his performing success on the r&b theater circuit, particularly with African-American female audiences.

He was well on his way to taking his place among the top performers known as "Bronze Baritones", the group of richvoiced singers that included Herb Jeffries, Arthur Prysock, and Billy Eckstine.

In September of 1952, Mayfield was returning by car to Los Angeles from an engagement

in Las Vegas. Mayfield was asleep in the passenger seat while his valet was driving. The driver failed to see a stalled truck in the road and the car, allegedly traveling at over 90 mph, plowed directly into the back of the truck. The force of the collision was such that the car's engine block was actually



driven into Mayfield's skull. He was pronounced dead at the scene and it was only discovered in the ambulance returning from the scene that he was still breathing. Mayfield spent several months in the hospital and by January of 1953 was able to return to the recording studio to cut *I Dare You Baby* and *Rivers Invitation* for Specialty.

The effects of the accident on Mayfield were profound. His good-looks were gone, replaced by severe scaring and other forms of facial disfigurement that included a large crater or dent extending from his hairline down to his nose. Already the writer of sad songs, Mayfield began experiencing a series of depressive episodes that were to last the remainder of his life. For a while he returned to Minden, but found the experience so alienating that he composed another of his classics, *Stranger In My Hometown* about it.

Throughout the second half of the 1950s Mayfield continued to have modest success as a recording and touring performer, but his depressions and his self-consciousness over



his facial disfigurement led him to abandon live performing.

In 1959 Mayfield approached BB King with some new compositions, including a clever ditty called *Hit The Road Jack*, which Mayfield conceptualized as a woman, with the Greek-chorus backing of her mother and her sister, telling a man it's time for him to go.

King thought that the song would be perfect for Ray Charles and helped Mayfield set up a meeting with the popular r&b/ soul/jazz superstar. Charles, by a fortunate coincidence, was planning to start his own record label, Tangerine, and was so impressed with the material Mayfield brought him that he signed him to a five-year contract as the label's principal songwriter. *Hit The Road Jack* was, of course, a massive success, and over the next several years Charles and Mayfield made for a formidable artist/songwriter combination that led to a number of hit records including *Hide Nor Hair, At the Club, Danger Zone,* and *On the Other Hand, Baby*.

It should be mentioned here that *Hit The Road Jack* continues, to this day, to generate an enormous amount of

revenue. It's still played on the radio, is often used in film soundtracks, and is frequently played in baseball stadiums, when a visiting team's pitcher is removed, and in Hockey arenas when a player is sent to the penalty box.

In the late sixties Mayfield once again attempted to move back to Minden. He was, at that time, fairly well-off financially with royalty income from *Hit the Road Jack* and other songs that enabled him to drive a Cadillac and purchase a nice, if unostentatious house in his hometown. The local authorities, however, assumed that a black man with a Cadillac and enough money to buy a house must be a drug dealer. Mayfield was repeatedly questioned, harassed, and when absolutely no evidence of drugs was found on or around him, framed. Drugs were planted in his house and car and he was arrested and charged. Mayfield eventually beat the spurious charges but it cost him most of his savings and soured him on living in his hometown forever.

In the early 1970s Mayfield recorded several albums for RCA. In 1974 he even had a minor hit, on Atlantic Records, with a kind of proto-rap, spoken word single titled *I Don't Want to Be President*.

Mayfield returned to Los Angeles and lived in quiet retirement until the early 1980s when he was "rediscovered" by former Butterfield Blues Band keyboardist Mark Naftalin. Naftalin was able to put together a group for Mayfield and get him performing gigs at local clubs and festivals. They maintained a close personal friendship with Mayfield even referring to Naftalin as "Mark Naftalin Mayfield" Mayfield's final recording, *Hit the Road Again*, with the Philip Walker Band, was recorded in 1982.

Percy Mayfield died, one day before his 64th birthday, on August 11, 1984.

Mayfield leaves two legacies, first as a recording artist responsible for some of the smoothest, most ironic, and saddest records ever made; and as a songwriter whose music has been recreated and reinterpreted by others in multiple genres. He was truly the Poet Laureate of the Blues.





Jammer Spotlight

by Doug Schunick

MIKE MEEHAN

Mike grew up in Cleveland and was encouraged to play an instrument at an early age by his parents.....but not DRUMS! "My parents wanted me to take up piano or guitar, but I stood my ground for the drums". Mike took lessons for about a year at around thirteen years old. He was in the Marching Band in high school at St Ignatius, where he played the snare drum.



While in school he would play along with Rock & Roll records while listening through headphones. Mike and his brother Pat, who plays guitar, would always jam together, and Mike says he was in garage bands throughout those school years, although he did" gig out" in the 80"s.

Mike says his approach to the art of drumming is being more of a "time keeper" where "less is more". As he says "no drumnastics", "fills are nice", but he takes a "minimalistic approach". As we guitar players know, "sometimes it's what you leave out that is as important as what you add in". Mike points out it's not a bad idea to put in " a pregnant pause every once in a while!" Mike really got into Led Zeppelin and the "heavy but simplistic playing of John Bonham". He also notes that the double drumming of the Allman Brothers was an early influence. He mentions Ginger Baker of Cream, and the Who's Keith Moon as favorites too. Mike also likes the double drumming of the Doobie Brothers, and mentioned Steve Gadd & Steve Jordan as a couple more of his favorites.

He eventually went back and discovered the originals; the old Blues players such as Elmore James (Dust My Broom), BB King, Robert Jr Lockwood, Albert King, Howlin' Wolf, Willie Dixon and Robert Johnson. Other favorites include Jimi Hendrix, Stevie Ray Vaughn and Eric Clapton. His interest in slide guitar followed Elmore James and includes Lowell George, of Little Feat, Ry Cooder, Bonnie Raitt, and, more recently, Derrek Trucks.

Mike is also a member of the Cleveland Drum Circle, where he and Dennis Wing get together, weather permitting, with other drummers every Sunday at Edgewater Park from 3 till 6. He said its great fun and says for everyone to come out, "it's always a fun time"!

Mike didn't play much over the past several years, but never quit playing altogether. Recently divorced, Mike has been getting out more often, and, in addition to attending the Blues Society Jams, Mike has been attending jams at the Happy Dog, Brothers Lounge, the Sand Trap, and in Akron, at Philliys' and Barmacy. He is available for gigs or as a permanent member of a local band should the situation present itself.

Mike's first set of drums were Sonors, but he now plays on a stainless steel set of Ludwigs, and has a djembe (African hand drum)he uses in the Drum Circle outings.

Thanks Mike! Look forward to seeing you at a jam real soon!

Mike can be reached at <u>mp.meehan@yahoo.com</u> or on Facebook.



Thank You Fair Volunteers!!!!



Patty Koteles, Linda Weiss

Bill Koteles

9 C.S.



Linda Calkins, Lisa Mikol

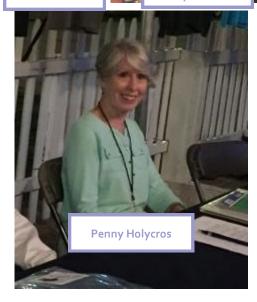


Susanne Mayer, Sara Mayer

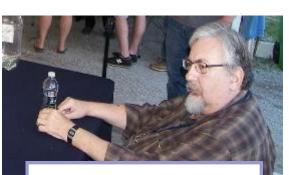


Future CBS Member









Don Grcic, (Missing Anna Marie Grcic)







John Adams, Dave Ollie











THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

YOU ROCK!









Band Spotlight

by Doug Schunick

GAETANO'S UNDERWORLD BLUES BAND



The Gaetano's Underworld Blues Band: Gaetano (TOM) Letizia : Guitarist, Song Writer, Vocalist Michael D'Elia : Drummer, Vocalist Lenny Gray : Bass

Gaetano Letizia, also know as Tom, and his Gaetano's Underworld Blues Band, opened last month's jam and treated us with a great mix of modern and standard Blues. As described in the band's press kit: "The band consists of three should ask Tom about this program!). He also has a business veteran musicians at the height of their game. Excellent, driving rhythm and soulful vocals combined with Gaetano's incendiary guitar make for national quality shows that audiences love. Great originals and blues standards taken to the highest level. "

Tom was born in Cleveland, and at an early age, around four, he became "mesmerized wondering how was that magic coming out of that box". His family played accordion, but his dad resisted getting him one, as he had seen other parents buy one, and at some point the accordions just gathered dust for lack of use. Eventually dad gave in ..."it was get me a guitar or I am leaving home!"

Tom's dad found him lessons at Bedford Music with John Stebal's drum store, where he took lessons for 6 yrs. In addition Tom has had 6 years of classical guitar training from Baldwin Wallace. Tom also graduated from his studies in the Shillinger System (old blindfingers says serious musicians degree from Kent State. Tom is not only a guitarist, but a teacher, and a composer.

At 15, the Beatles hit and eventually he heard Purple Haze by Hendrix. Seeing Eric Clapton and Cream at Music Hall, was a turning point for Tom, as he (& old blindfingers) still respect Clapton's body of work. He began performing his own blues shows at the age of 16. His band Ironwood, with Larry Keller, played Blues Rock at mini festivals, the Agora & JB's. A disciple of BB King & Jimmy Hendrix, Tom's main influences are BB King (LIVE at the Regal), Wes Montgomery, and Glen Schwartz.

But it was seeing the original James Gang with Glen Schwartz & Bill Jarric that really turned his head. When he would see Glen Scwartz, he always ended up standing with his mouth open in amazement. Tom says the early Glen was" intense, friendly...like a comet, as good as Clapton!" Glen and Tom would become friends, as "Bill Jeric got me up on stage at 16 or 17 to play with the James Gang". One of his first stage appearances was sitting in for Joe Walsh with the James Gang at Kent State in 1970. Locally, Tom was also friends with Robert Jr Lockwood and is still friends with Travis Haddix. Early performances with June Core of Robert Jr. Lockwood's band, gave Tom a strong blues foundation based on B.B. King, Albert King, Muddy Waters and all the other great Blues men. Tom also wanted me to mention guitarist Ray Miller, as an all time favorite player oh his.

Recommended listening are "Worry, Worry, Worry", BB King from the lp Cook County Jail", and Ray Miller, a Jazz-Blues guitarist, who "plays from his heart & soul." Tom also mentioned Joe Bonamassa, Buddy Guy, and a recommended listen is the "Hodoo Man" lp with Jr Wells and Buddy Guy.

"Back in 1973 I started having anxiety attacks...I thought I was losing it". "If it happens on stage , you feel like you are going to die." "I just was not confident enough to go to LA or NY."

As a highly intense performer, you are very vulnerable when you are young, especially when your family are not supportive". But the message was clear, "I got music to write!"

Well, as life goes, Tom was talked into joining the family asphalt business, which was supposed to be "50-50 on the business and his music". From his *Chuck Yarborough inter-view* :

After six months, my father said, 'Get your [expletive] in here and run this thing.' I got sucked into that and started having a family," Letizia said. "I wasn't going to let little kids get beat up because Dad wouldn't go to work." He stuck it out, got the kids through college and his Bainbridge home paid off. In March of 2013, the now 62-year-old kissed the business goodbye. "That was my father's dream, not mine," he said.

From *Blue Barry Interview*: "Playing over 40 years, studying jazz, blues, classical, and other styles of guitar he can do anything on the instrument. Looks like he cut his first album in 1981, and has continued to grow and give his music to us. Tom studied music composition at the Baldwin Wallace Conservatory of Music, and is a Certified Berklee College of Music PULSE system teacher."

"Jazz guys call me a Blues guy, and Blues guys call me a Jazz guy". He loves the playing of Wes Montgomery and George Benson, who he got to spend a day with... and they became friends also. Tom feels George is "the Michael Jordan of Guitar"! (wow! says old blindfingers!) He also has been influenced by Segovia and Julian Bream.

Tom loved the singing of Bobby Blue and his band. He says that he began to understand the Blues when he would hear roots music singing from men working with him on the asphalt crew all day and "they would sing out of the pain & struggle of hard work." From Press Kit: "The Underworld Band is Gaetano's blues trio formed in 2010. The band won the Cleveland Blues Society's 2014 Memphis Challenge and did four great shows in Memphis. The band has two excellent albums, Voodoo Doll & Other Blues Lessons 2014 and Resurrection 2016. Gaetano's music stays true to the roots of blues while advancing the standard blues forms to delight the listener. "A new take on the blues" describes Gaetano's treatment of modern blues problems in our lives now that we're far from sharecropping in Mississippi."

Tom currently has 30 students at his studio in Bainbridge and also teaches at Stebal Drums. He and his wife like flowers, and he likes to spend time with the family. He enjoys trap shooting with his two boys, and also enjoys watching Cleveland sports teams.

Tom would like to add that the underlying themes in his compositions are "spiritual journeys....all about trying to be a good person".

Now, when you go see Tom and the band, make sure you ask him about that custom made guitar he plays.... it is a beauty! And check the band out on YouTube!!

Thanks Tom Gaetano Letizia.

Website: <u>www.underworldblues.com</u> Phone: 440-668-1772 Email: gaetano@gaetanoletizia.com





JIMMY'S JUKE JOINT CD REVIEW

TAS CRU SIMMERED AND STEWED

Hello again blues lovers far and wide! Jimmy's is open for business and the joint is jumpin'. Once again the house has been rockin' with the likes of Jonn Del Toro Richardson, Kenny Wayne Shepard, Janiva Magness, Ana Popovic, and Joe Louis Walker passing through and laying down the sound. And a fun

Bv

Jim Bell



time was had by all!

Another one of our esteemed guests was Tas Cru and the Tortured Souls. Appearing as a trio, Tas and his band cut loose and put on a powerful show. Keeping time on the drum kit was Tas's longtime friend Sonny Rock. Laying down the bass line was Dayton, Ohio's own Rob Paxton.

Tas hails from a part of the country not known as a haven of blues music or artists. Located about 60 miles north of Syracuse, New York, home for Tas is Watertown. He admits he was not involved in music during his childhood. Except for a short stint as a fledgling trombone player, Cru did not pick up the guitar until years later. He describes his training as "falling in with a rougher crowd of older, mostly self-taught" musicians. It was there Tas was exposed to the Sun Records sound, and the early blues and country musicians that recorded under that label.

As Tas grew in his musical talents he mastered harmonica, vocals, and a range of guitars including resonator, electric, and cigar-box. Throw in some good ol' slide action and Tas can pretty much cover any blues sound anyone would want. His current album, Simmered & Stewed (VizzTone Records) is a testament to that mastery. In his own words, Tas describes this album as a project that has been long in the making, even if he didn't realize it. As he played countless shows and festivals he found himself returning to some of his favorite songs time and again. So, he reasoned, why not record an album that would showcase these favorites, and really give them their full due? And therein lies the name of the album. These songs have sat on the stove top of time and slowly melded into the rich, genuine concoction that they are. A concoction achieved by a slow simmer and stew. To help him with the presentation, Tas brought in a whole kitchen full of talented musicians and singers to fill out every song. No less than eighteen artists add their own special ingredients to the feast.

The album kicks off with the title track from his 2009 album Grizzle 'n Bone. This is a great kick-up-your-heels-and-dance tune with a rollicking, boogie-woogie beat. Complete with a great boogie piano played by Mr. Chip Lamson.

When my love was fresh and young My baby fed me right Kept the kitchen open... mornin', noon and night Fire in the oven, it was smokin' hot Always somethin' steamin' in the pudding pot But those are gone All I get is grizzle 'n bone

Grizzle 'n bone Grizzle 'n bone All I get is grizzle 'n bone Use to be biscuits and gravy All I get is grizzle 'n bone Deeper into the album Tas slows things down with a ballad off his album Jus' Desserts (2010). A familiar topic in music, Tas sings of a lost love and his trying to keep her memory fresh in his mind.

The title of the song is <u>Time and Time.</u>

Sun shines through my window Come to wash away the night Shadows my sweet revelry Still dance in the morning light So I turn my head, close my eyes Try to hold you in my mind Well, I keep you always waking Time and time

And what better way to close out a blues record then a good old gospel song? The only cover song on the album, Tas puts his own touch on the well-known Gary Johnson and Carl Smith song, <u>Higher and Higher.</u> Amen and Hallelujah! Without a doubt, Tas Cru and the Tortured Souls can lay out the blues. Be sure to put them on your bucket list!



Tas Cru

That's all for now friends. Be well. Take care of each other. See ya on down the road! Jimmy



Upcoming Jams

ALL JAMS START AT 7:30PM HOST BAND 7:30PM TO 8:30PM. JAMMERS START 8:40PM UNTIL 11:00PM.

Sept. 11	Union House	Butch Armstrong and the Armstrong Bearcat Band
Oct 9	Music Box Supper Club	Anthony Lovano's Supernatural Band
Nov. 13	Sand Trap	Blue Collar

Cleveland Blues Society WWW.CLEVELANDBLUES.ORG THE CROSSBOADS OF BUSTBELT BLUES

Stay tuned for NEW CBS Website to launch later this month!!!



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Deano and the Troublemakers



DD & The Knockers



Idol Frets



Di Di Franklin



Hare of the Dog



Gaetano's Underworld Blues Band



Grady Miller

Gypsy

1.12 States

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Skip Werke



Pedro Diaz



Joe Rollin Porter



Second Hand Dogs



The Project



The Gundry Project





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But did you know that the blues has its own "Poet Laureate". That would be Percy Mayfield, the songwriter and



vocalist who's life and career were a mixture of great success along with great hardship and tragedy.

Mayfield was born in 1920 in Minden, LA, a mid-sized community located in the middle of the state about thirty-five miles East of Shreveport. Mayfield's mother died when he was he was twelve, and while he managed to complete high school, his education was interrupted by frequent absences that included riding the rails and traveling about in search of work. Despite the spottiness of his education, Mayfield showed a marked talent and interest in poetry. He began transferring that interest to songwriting and in 1940 moved to Los Angeles.

In Los Angeles, he began pitching songs to various record companies, with the primary hope that his hero Jimmy Witherspoon would record them. When he presented a demo recording of *Two Years of Torture* to Al Patrick at Supreme records Patrick said that, yes, he would record the song but that he wanted Mayfield to sing it himself. That record, and subsequent releases, did well enough for Art Rupe of Specialty Records, (Little Richard, Guitar Slim, Roy Milton, Soul Stirrers), to sign him to an extended contract as recording artist and songwriter. Another stoke of good luck found him teaming up with Maxwell Davis, the saxophonist and arranger also responsible for many of T-Bone Walker's recorded arrangements. Davis was easily the best and most creative arranger of the era.

Mayfield, at that time, wrote mainly blues-ballads, slower songs, that featured his creative genius for lyrics, that defined heartbreak, longing and loneliness in ways previously unexpressed in the blues. In 1950 he cut the song many consider to be one of finest compositions in all of American songwriting, *Please Send Me Someone to Love*. It's a song in the form of a prayer or a plea asking for world peace, an end to discrimination, and as a sort of abashed personal request follow-up, someone to love. It's a bit like the way a child writes to Santa Claus asking for no more war, and end to world hunger, and, if you can get around to it Santa, a bicycle.

Please Send Me Someone to Love was Mayfield's biggest seller (under his own name), spending 27 weeks on the charts. It's been covered dozens of times by everyone from BB King to Sade to Fiona Apple and remains a staple in the blues, jazz and r&b repertoire.

Another Mayfield song from that era that has been covered repeatedly is *River's Invitation*, maybe the most wry, ironic song about suicide ever written.

The early 1950s were a time of great success for Mayfield. He was tall, thin and exceptionally good-looking, attributes that contributed to his performing success on the r&b theater circuit, particularly with African-American female audiences.

He was well on his way to taking his place among the top performers known as "Bronze Baritones", the group of richvoiced singers that included Herb Jeffries, Arthur Prysock, and Billy Eckstine.

In September of 1952, Mayfield was returning by car to Los Angeles from an engagement

in Las Vegas. Mayfield was asleep in the passenger seat while his valet was driving. The driver failed to see a stalled truck in the road and the car, allegedly traveling at over 90 mph, plowed directly into the back of the truck. The force of the collision was such that the car's engine block was actually



driven into Mayfield's skull. He was pronounced dead at the scene and it was only discovered in the ambulance returning from the scene that he was still breathing. Mayfield spent several months in the hospital and by January of 1953 was able to return to the recording studio to cut *I Dare You Baby* and *Rivers Invitation* for Specialty.

The effects of the accident on Mayfield were profound. His good-looks were gone, replaced by severe scaring and other forms of facial disfigurement that included a large crater or dent extending from his hairline down to his nose. Already the writer of sad songs, Mayfield began experiencing a series of depressive episodes that were to last the remainder of his life. For a while he returned to Minden, but found the experience so alienating that he composed another of his classics, *Stranger In My Hometown* about it.

Throughout the second half of the 1950s Mayfield continued to have modest success as a recording and touring performer, but his depressions and his self-consciousness over



his facial disfigurement led him to abandon live performing.

In 1959 Mayfield approached BB King with some new compositions, including a clever ditty called *Hit The Road Jack*, which Mayfield conceptualized as a woman, with the Greek-chorus backing of her mother and her sister, telling a man it's time for him to go.

King thought that the song would be perfect for Ray Charles and helped Mayfield set up a meeting with the popular r&b/ soul/jazz superstar. Charles, by a fortunate coincidence, was planning to start his own record label, Tangerine, and was so impressed with the material Mayfield brought him that he signed him to a five-year contract as the label's principal songwriter. *Hit The Road Jack* was, of course, a massive success, and over the next several years Charles and Mayfield made for a formidable artist/songwriter combination that led to a number of hit records including *Hide Nor Hair, At the Club, Danger Zone,* and *On the Other Hand, Baby*.

It should be mentioned here that *Hit The Road Jack* continues, to this day, to generate an enormous amount of

revenue. It's still played on the radio, is often used in film soundtracks, and is frequently played in baseball stadiums, when a visiting team's pitcher is removed, and in Hockey arenas when a player is sent to the penalty box.

In the late sixties Mayfield once again attempted to move back to Minden. He was, at that time, fairly well-off financially with royalty income from *Hit the Road Jack* and other songs that enabled him to drive a Cadillac and purchase a nice, if unostentatious house in his hometown. The local authorities, however, assumed that a black man with a Cadillac and enough money to buy a house must be a drug dealer. Mayfield was repeatedly questioned, harassed, and when absolutely no evidence of drugs was found on or around him, framed. Drugs were planted in his house and car and he was arrested and charged. Mayfield eventually beat the spurious charges but it cost him most of his savings and soured him on living in his hometown forever.

In the early 1970s Mayfield recorded several albums for RCA. In 1974 he even had a minor hit, on Atlantic Records, with a kind of proto-rap, spoken word single titled *I Don't Want to Be President*.

Mayfield returned to Los Angeles and lived in quiet retirement until the early 1980s when he was "rediscovered" by former Butterfield Blues Band keyboardist Mark Naftalin. Naftalin was able to put together a group for Mayfield and get him performing gigs at local clubs and festivals. They maintained a close personal friendship with Mayfield even referring to Naftalin as "Mark Naftalin Mayfield" Mayfield's final recording, *Hit the Road Again*, with the Philip Walker Band, was recorded in 1982.

Percy Mayfield died, one day before his 64th birthday, on August 11, 1984.

Mayfield leaves two legacies, first as a recording artist responsible for some of the smoothest, most ironic, and saddest records ever made; and as a songwriter whose music has been recreated and reinterpreted by others in multiple genres. He was truly the Poet Laureate of the Blues.





Jammer Spotlight

by Doug Schunick

MIKE MEEHAN

Mike grew up in Cleveland and was encouraged to play an instrument at an early age by his parents.....but not DRUMS! "My parents wanted me to take up piano or guitar, but I stood my ground for the drums". Mike took lessons for about a year at around thirteen years old. He was in the Marching Band in high school at St Ignatius, where he played the snare drum.



While in school he would play along with Rock & Roll records while listening through headphones. Mike and his brother Pat, who plays guitar, would always jam together, and Mike says he was in garage bands throughout those school years, although he did" gig out" in the 80"s.

Mike says his approach to the art of drumming is being more of a "time keeper" where "less is more". As he says "no drumnastics", "fills are nice", but he takes a "minimalistic approach". As we guitar players know, "sometimes it's what you leave out that is as important as what you add in". Mike points out it's not a bad idea to put in " a pregnant pause every once in a while!" Mike really got into Led Zeppelin and the "heavy but simplistic playing of John Bonham". He also notes that the double drumming of the Allman Brothers was an early influence. He mentions Ginger Baker of Cream, and the Who's Keith Moon as favorites too. Mike also likes the double drumming of the Doobie Brothers, and mentioned Steve Gadd & Steve Jordan as a couple more of his favorites.

He eventually went back and discovered the originals; the old Blues players such as Elmore James (Dust My Broom), BB King, Robert Jr Lockwood, Albert King, Howlin' Wolf, Willie Dixon and Robert Johnson. Other favorites include Jimi Hendrix, Stevie Ray Vaughn and Eric Clapton. His interest in slide guitar followed Elmore James and includes Lowell George, of Little Feat, Ry Cooder, Bonnie Raitt, and, more recently, Derrek Trucks.

Mike is also a member of the Cleveland Drum Circle, where he and Dennis Wing get together, weather permitting, with other drummers every Sunday at Edgewater Park from 3 till 6. He said its great fun and says for everyone to come out, "it's always a fun time"!

Mike didn't play much over the past several years, but never quit playing altogether. Recently divorced, Mike has been getting out more often, and, in addition to attending the Blues Society Jams, Mike has been attending jams at the Happy Dog, Brothers Lounge, the Sand Trap, and in Akron, at Philliys' and Barmacy. He is available for gigs or as a permanent member of a local band should the situation present itself.

Mike's first set of drums were Sonors, but he now plays on a stainless steel set of Ludwigs, and has a djembe (African hand drum)he uses in the Drum Circle outings.

Thanks Mike! Look forward to seeing you at a jam real soon!

Mike can be reached at <u>mp.meehan@yahoo.com</u> or on Facebook.



Thank You Fair Volunteers!!!!



Patty Koteles, Linda Weiss

Bill Koteles

9 C.S.



Linda Calkins, Lisa Mikol

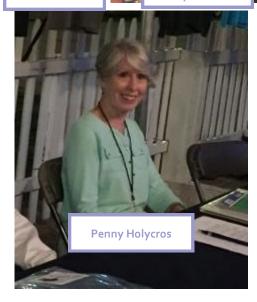


Susanne Mayer, Sara Mayer

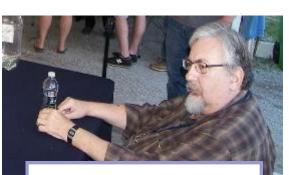


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Band Spotlight

by Doug Schunick

GAETANO'S UNDERWORLD BLUES BAND



The Gaetano's Underworld Blues Band: Gaetano (TOM) Letizia : Guitarist, Song Writer, Vocalist Michael D'Elia : Drummer, Vocalist Lenny Gray : Bass

Gaetano Letizia, also know as Tom, and his Gaetano's Underworld Blues Band, opened last month's jam and treated us with a great mix of modern and standard Blues. As described in the band's press kit: "The band consists of three should ask Tom about this program!). He also has a business veteran musicians at the height of their game. Excellent, driving rhythm and soulful vocals combined with Gaetano's incendiary guitar make for national quality shows that audiences love. Great originals and blues standards taken to the highest level. "

Tom was born in Cleveland, and at an early age, around four, he became "mesmerized wondering how was that magic coming out of that box". His family played accordion, but his dad resisted getting him one, as he had seen other parents buy one, and at some point the accordions just gathered dust for lack of use. Eventually dad gave in ..."it was get me a guitar or I am leaving home!"

Tom's dad found him lessons at Bedford Music with John Stebal's drum store, where he took lessons for 6 yrs. In addition Tom has had 6 years of classical guitar training from Baldwin Wallace. Tom also graduated from his studies in the Shillinger System (old blindfingers says serious musicians degree from Kent State. Tom is not only a guitarist, but a teacher, and a composer.

At 15, the Beatles hit and eventually he heard Purple Haze by Hendrix. Seeing Eric Clapton and Cream at Music Hall, was a turning point for Tom, as he (& old blindfingers) still respect Clapton's body of work. He began performing his own blues shows at the age of 16. His band Ironwood, with Larry Keller, played Blues Rock at mini festivals, the Agora & JB's. A disciple of BB King & Jimmy Hendrix, Tom's main influences are BB King (LIVE at the Regal), Wes Montgomery, and Glen Schwartz.

But it was seeing the original James Gang with Glen Schwartz & Bill Jarric that really turned his head. When he would see Glen Scwartz, he always ended up standing with his mouth open in amazement. Tom says the early Glen was" intense, friendly...like a comet, as good as Clapton!" Glen and Tom would become friends, as "Bill Jeric got me up on stage at 16 or 17 to play with the James Gang". One of his first stage appearances was sitting in for Joe Walsh with the James Gang at Kent State in 1970. Locally, Tom was also friends with Robert Jr Lockwood and is still friends with Travis Haddix. Early performances with June Core of Robert Jr. Lockwood's band, gave Tom a strong blues foundation based on B.B. King, Albert King, Muddy Waters and all the other great Blues men. Tom also wanted me to mention guitarist Ray Miller, as an all time favorite player oh his.

Recommended listening are "Worry, Worry, Worry", BB King from the lp Cook County Jail", and Ray Miller, a Jazz-Blues guitarist, who "plays from his heart & soul." Tom also mentioned Joe Bonamassa, Buddy Guy, and a recommended listen is the "Hodoo Man" lp with Jr Wells and Buddy Guy.

"Back in 1973 I started having anxiety attacks...I thought I was losing it". "If it happens on stage , you feel like you are going to die." "I just was not confident enough to go to LA or NY."

As a highly intense performer, you are very vulnerable when you are young, especially when your family are not supportive". But the message was clear, "I got music to write!"

Well, as life goes, Tom was talked into joining the family asphalt business, which was supposed to be "50-50 on the business and his music". From his *Chuck Yarborough inter-view* :

After six months, my father said, 'Get your [expletive] in here and run this thing.' I got sucked into that and started having a family," Letizia said. "I wasn't going to let little kids get beat up because Dad wouldn't go to work." He stuck it out, got the kids through college and his Bainbridge home paid off. In March of 2013, the now 62-year-old kissed the business goodbye. "That was my father's dream, not mine," he said.

From *Blue Barry Interview*: "Playing over 40 years, studying jazz, blues, classical, and other styles of guitar he can do anything on the instrument. Looks like he cut his first album in 1981, and has continued to grow and give his music to us. Tom studied music composition at the Baldwin Wallace Conservatory of Music, and is a Certified Berklee College of Music PULSE system teacher."

"Jazz guys call me a Blues guy, and Blues guys call me a Jazz guy". He loves the playing of Wes Montgomery and George Benson, who he got to spend a day with... and they became friends also. Tom feels George is "the Michael Jordan of Guitar"! (wow! says old blindfingers!) He also has been influenced by Segovia and Julian Bream.

Tom loved the singing of Bobby Blue and his band. He says that he began to understand the Blues when he would hear roots music singing from men working with him on the asphalt crew all day and "they would sing out of the pain & struggle of hard work." From Press Kit: "The Underworld Band is Gaetano's blues trio formed in 2010. The band won the Cleveland Blues Society's 2014 Memphis Challenge and did four great shows in Memphis. The band has two excellent albums, Voodoo Doll & Other Blues Lessons 2014 and Resurrection 2016. Gaetano's music stays true to the roots of blues while advancing the standard blues forms to delight the listener. "A new take on the blues" describes Gaetano's treatment of modern blues problems in our lives now that we're far from sharecropping in Mississippi."

Tom currently has 30 students at his studio in Bainbridge and also teaches at Stebal Drums. He and his wife like flowers, and he likes to spend time with the family. He enjoys trap shooting with his two boys, and also enjoys watching Cleveland sports teams.

Tom would like to add that the underlying themes in his compositions are "spiritual journeys....all about trying to be a good person".

Now, when you go see Tom and the band, make sure you ask him about that custom made guitar he plays.... it is a beauty! And check the band out on YouTube!!

Thanks Tom Gaetano Letizia.

Website: <u>www.underworldblues.com</u> Phone: 440-668-1772 Email: gaetano@gaetanoletizia.com





JIMMY'S JUKE JOINT CD REVIEW

TAS CRU SIMMERED AND STEWED

Hello again blues lovers far and wide! Jimmy's is open for business and the joint is jumpin'. Once again the house has been rockin' with the likes of Jonn Del Toro Richardson, Kenny Wayne Shepard, Janiva Magness, Ana Popovic, and Joe Louis Walker passing through and laying down the sound. And a fun

Bv

Jim Bell



time was had by all!

Another one of our esteemed guests was Tas Cru and the Tortured Souls. Appearing as a trio, Tas and his band cut loose and put on a powerful show. Keeping time on the drum kit was Tas's longtime friend Sonny Rock. Laying down the bass line was Dayton, Ohio's own Rob Paxton.

Tas hails from a part of the country not known as a haven of blues music or artists. Located about 60 miles north of Syracuse, New York, home for Tas is Watertown. He admits he was not involved in music during his childhood. Except for a short stint as a fledgling trombone player, Cru did not pick up the guitar until years later. He describes his training as "falling in with a rougher crowd of older, mostly self-taught" musicians. It was there Tas was exposed to the Sun Records sound, and the early blues and country musicians that recorded under that label.

As Tas grew in his musical talents he mastered harmonica, vocals, and a range of guitars including resonator, electric, and cigar-box. Throw in some good ol' slide action and Tas can pretty much cover any blues sound anyone would want. His current album, Simmered & Stewed (VizzTone Records) is a testament to that mastery. In his own words, Tas describes this album as a project that has been long in the making, even if he didn't realize it. As he played countless shows and festivals he found himself returning to some of his favorite songs time and again. So, he reasoned, why not record an album that would showcase these favorites, and really give them their full due? And therein lies the name of the album. These songs have sat on the stove top of time and slowly melded into the rich, genuine concoction that they are. A concoction achieved by a slow simmer and stew. To help him with the presentation, Tas brought in a whole kitchen full of talented musicians and singers to fill out every song. No less than eighteen artists add their own special ingredients to the feast.

The album kicks off with the title track from his 2009 album Grizzle 'n Bone. This is a great kick-up-your-heels-and-dance tune with a rollicking, boogie-woogie beat. Complete with a great boogie piano played by Mr. Chip Lamson.

When my love was fresh and young My baby fed me right Kept the kitchen open... mornin', noon and night Fire in the oven, it was smokin' hot Always somethin' steamin' in the pudding pot But those are gone All I get is grizzle 'n bone

Grizzle 'n bone Grizzle 'n bone All I get is grizzle 'n bone Use to be biscuits and gravy All I get is grizzle 'n bone Deeper into the album Tas slows things down with a ballad off his album Jus' Desserts (2010). A familiar topic in music, Tas sings of a lost love and his trying to keep her memory fresh in his mind.

The title of the song is <u>Time and Time.</u>

Sun shines through my window Come to wash away the night Shadows my sweet revelry Still dance in the morning light So I turn my head, close my eyes Try to hold you in my mind Well, I keep you always waking Time and time

And what better way to close out a blues record then a good old gospel song? The only cover song on the album, Tas puts his own touch on the well-known Gary Johnson and Carl Smith song, <u>Higher and Higher.</u> Amen and Hallelujah! Without a doubt, Tas Cru and the Tortured Souls can lay out the blues. Be sure to put them on your bucket list!



Tas Cru

That's all for now friends. Be well. Take care of each other. See ya on down the road! Jimmy



Upcoming Jams

ALL JAMS START AT 7:30PM HOST BAND 7:30PM TO 8:30PM. JAMMERS START 8:40PM UNTIL 11:00PM.

Sept. 11	Union House	Butch Armstrong and the Armstrong Bearcat Band
Oct 9	Music Box Supper Club	Anthony Lovano's Supernatural Band
Nov. 13	Sand Trap	Blue Collar

Cleveland Blues Society WWW.CLEVELANDBLUES.ORG THE CROSSBOADS OF BUSTBELT BLUES

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Deano and the Troublemakers



DD & The Knockers



Idol Frets



Di Di Franklin



Hare of the Dog



Gaetano's Underworld Blues Band



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Joe Rollin Porter



Second Hand Dogs



The Gundry Project

